

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1508

INFO CINCPAC FOR POLAD

CINCPACREP CANBERRA AUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4535

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, PFOR, AS, FR

SUBJ: OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN VIEW OF GOA PROTESTS OVER
FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS

1. DURING CONVERSATION AUG 14 WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY SHANN OF
DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, VISITING AMERICAN PROFESSOR
GRIFFITH ASKED WHAT GOA EXPECTED TO GAIN FROM ARGUMENTS
WITH BRITISH AND FRENCH IN WHICH GOA INVOLVED. QUESTION
RAISED IN CONTEXT OF PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S ARGUMENT
WITH PM HEATH IN OTTAWA OVER MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS
AND OVER AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL PROTESTS AGAINST FRENCH
NUCLEAR TESTING IN SOUTH PACIFIC. BEFORE QUESTION WAS
ANSWERED, PROFESSOR GRIFFITH FOLLOWED UP WITH STATEMENT
THAT BOTH HMG AND FRENCH GOVT. WERE IN A POSITION TO
ADVERSELY INFLUENCE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION WITH THE
COMMON MARKET, SCHEDULED TO BE RAISED IN 1974.

2. SHANN ANSWERED SIMPLY THAT HE EXPECTED THE ARGUMENT
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WITH HEATH TO BE OVERCOME FAIRLY EASILY BUT THAT HE IS

CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE FRENCH ACTIVITIES INIMICAL TO AUSTRALIAN INTERESTS. HE NOTED THAT FRENCH HAD "SOME THINGS GOING" IN SOUTH WEST PACIFIC, INCLUDING: A) PROPOSAL FOR COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA IN URANIUM ENRICHMENT AND B) NUMBER OF FRENCH DEPENDENCIES IN AREA TOWARD WHICH AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDE COULD BE IMPORTANT. HE OPINED THAT GOA WOULD "GET THROUGH" THE CURRENT SERIES OF FRENCH TESTS WITHOUT STIRRING UP AUSTRALIAN POPULACE TO ANY GREATER DEGREE THAN AT PRESENT, PROVIDED FRENCH DID NOT EXPLODE A LARGE BOMB IN THE FEW TESTS REMAINING IN 1973. NEXT YEAR, HE INDICATED, MIGHT BE A DIFFERENT MATTER AND IMPLIED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PROGRAM OF PRO-TESTING FRENCH ATMOSPHERIC TESTING WILL CONTINUE. SHANN STATED THAT AUSTRALIAN PROTESTS HAD THE OBJECT OF FORCING THE FRENCH TO TEST UNDERGROUND AND WERE NOT INTENDED TO STOP ALL TESTING. IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION, HE NOTED THERE WAS NO LARGE BODY OF OPINION WITHIN AUSTRALIA WHICH FAVORED THE COMPLETE CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING. WHEN REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE POSSIBILITY REPORTED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS THAT THE U.S. MIGHT ALLOW THE FRENCH TO USE U.S. UNDERGROUND SITES FOR TESTING, SHANN RESPONDED, "I WISH TO GOD YOU WOULD." IN SUMMARY, SHANN SAID THAT IF THE FRENCH TESTS DID NOT POLLUTE THE ATMOSPHERE, WHY DIDN'T THE FRENCH HOLD THEIR TESTS ON CORSICA.

3. COMMENT: QUESTION ABOUT AUSTRALIAN ATTITUDES TO FRENCH TESTING WAS RAISED IN TENDENTIOUS MANNER BY VISITING PROFESSOR WHO IMMEDIATELY DREW CONCLUSION IT WAS NOT IN AUSTRALIA'S INTEREST TO CONTINUE TO PROTEST. SHANN'S REPLY INDICATES BOTH AN AWARENESS OF THE FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION ON THIS ISSUE IN AUSTRALIA AND A DETERMINATION TO CARRY OUT THE POLICIES OF THE CURRENT ALP GOVERNMENT WHICH OPPOSES ATMOSPHERIC TESTING BOTH BY CHINA AND BY FRANCE. SHANN'S RESPONSES WERE, HOWEVER, GIVEN IN A MODERATE AND THOUGHTFUL TONE AND WITH FULL RECOGNITION THAT GOA IS AWARE OF PERILS ATTENDANT TO THEIR CONTINUING PROTESTS OVER FRENCH ATMOSPHERIC TESTING.
GREEN

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